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RIGHTLY EXPLAINING  
**THE WORD  
OF TRUTH**

**JEWS AND JUDAISM  
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

**GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS  
AND PREACHERS**

**THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS  
(VICTORIA)  
MELBOURNE 2007**

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Rightly Explaining the Word of Truth

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## FOREWORD

This present work, on the treatment of Jews and Judaism in the New Testament, first appeared in 1994. As the Hon. William Kaye Q.C. explained in the Introduction, it resulted from the concern of both Christians and Jews at the way in which misinterpretations of several passages in the Gospels and other books of the New Testament have led to hostile views of Jews and their religion. Over the centuries these views have had their effect on the rise and spread of antisemitism, and on the oppression and persecution of the Jews which often ensued.

It was to correct these misinterpretations that the Council of Christians and Jews asked several Christian and Jewish scholars to study the question and produce guidelines for teachers and preachers in the use of these texts. The current work is the result. It has had a wide circulation since 1994, having been used extensively by lecturers and students in theological colleges, preachers in Christian church congregations and teachers of religion courses and related subjects in secondary schools.

The demand for copies of this work has been such that the Council is now reissuing it, in a new format and with additional bibliographical references supplied by Dr Brendan Byrne S.J. The Council hopes that this book will continue to help readers to use the New Testament texts studied here with informed understanding and balance.

On behalf of the Council of Christians and Jews, I thank the contributors to the original work - some of whom sadly are now dead - and Dr Byrne for his valuable contribution to the bibliography.

William J. Clancy AM  
Chairman, Executive Committee  
The Council of Christians and Jews (Victoria)

Melbourne, June 2007

# INTRODUCTION

## The Continuing Problem

For many years it has been recognized by scholars – theologians, historians and philosophers – that there were passages in the New Testament which refer to Judaism and the Jews in terms of animosity. For almost two millennia those passages of the New Testament have caused misunderstandings of Judaism and provoked odium of Jews amongst Christian communities.

More particularly those passages have been exploited throughout the ages and continue to be exploited by countless persons for political and social ends, and in some quarters for religious purposes. Hate and odium have led to and created antisemitism expressed by suspicion, mistrust, contempt, prejudice, false charges, discrimination of Jews by Christians, and by persecution, brutalities, forced conversions on pain of death, pogroms, murders and massacres of Jews as exemplified by the Crusades, the York Tower massacre, the Spanish Inquisition, the Chmielnicki massacres, subsequent and countless pogroms in Eastern Europe. Those events were all overshadowed by the ultimate of all horrors in the history of mankind, the Holocaust perpetrated by pagan Nazis with the full and active participation of, among others, German, Austrian, French, Polish and Hungarian Christians.

## Steps Towards Change

The founding of the British Council of Christians and Jews in 1942 by religious and lay leaders of both faiths marked the first step by the enlightened world to bring to an end, by mutual understanding and respect between Christians and Jews, antisemitism and its cruel and murderous consequences. Similarly, the Second Vatican Council in 1965, by promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, took an unprecedented step in the history of the church by presenting Judaism and Jews to Roman Catholics worldwide in a manner freed of some traditional antisemitic connotations. Subsequent commissions of the Roman Catholic hierarchy expanded upon the Vatican's pronouncement.

In 1983 the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches commended for the use of its member churches a series of Guidelines of proper relations between Jews and Christians. A resolution made at the Lambeth Conference of the Church of England in 1988, the Anglican Church of Canada's document, *Rethinking Christian Attitudes Towards Jews and Christians* (1987), and publication of the Australian Catholic Bishops' *Guidelines for Catholic Jewish Relations* (1993), were all further church initiatives to overcome traditional misrepresentation and misunderstandings.

### A Local Issue

Notwithstanding such positive moves, in recent times there has been a resurgence of antisemitic manifestations, behaviour and violence. In many parts of the world, these have taken the form of synagogue bombings, Jewish cemetery and sacred memorial daubings, physical attacks on Jewish men and women, and publications of revisionist history denying the Holocaust.

For many years Australia has been relatively free of those forms of hostility towards Jews and Judaism. However, almost simultaneous with events and experiences overseas, similar forms of attack have been suffered by Australian Jews, and made upon synagogues and Jewish institutions in various parts of the country. There has been a distribution of publications disseminating evil falsehoods about Jews and their faith. By these means old hatreds have been revived and advanced in Australia, bringing about increased antisemitic expressions and activities.

During the latter half of 1991 the attention of the Executive Committee of the Council of Christians and Jews (Victoria) was drawn to the form of teachings in a Melbourne Church School of a particular New Testament text which reflected disparagingly on Jews. Those teachings included the claim of Christianity having superseded Judaism, and the pernicious charge that the Jews had killed God's promised messiah, Jesus, which developed into the historical accusation of deicide against the Jews. For almost 2,000 years those teachings provided and continue to provide seeds for antisemitism.

## Study Commissioned

The Executive recognized those and similar teachings arising out of the New Testament as forming part of complex and vexed inter-faith problems, and as having caused misunderstanding of faith and hatred of Jews leading to antisemitism in its many and varied forms. It was further recognized by the Executive that teachers and preachers should receive adequate guidelines to enable them to present areas of the New Testament in a manner without exciting hatred. Accordingly the Executive appointed its Special Committee with the following terms of reference:

- a. To identify areas in the New Testament, the teachings of which, without appropriate explanations and cautions, are capable of provoking feelings of hostility towards Jews and thereby causing distress to the sensibilities of members of the Jewish faith;*
- b. To consider whether problems arising out of those areas and teachings stem from differences between the Christian faith as expressed in the New Testament and the Jewish faith, or whether they stem from misguided interpretations of the New Testament; and*
- c. To draft guidelines for clergy and teachers for the purposes of avoiding the consequences referred to in (a) hereof.*

## Special Committee

Members appointed to the Special Committee by the Executive were: the Reverend Dr John Wright, Dr John Foster, Sister Shirley Sedawie nds, Father Peter Cross, the Reverend Robert Gribben, the Reverend Dr Dorothy Lee, Rabbi John Levi AM, Rabbi R. Lubofsky, Rabbi D. Schiff, Mr Mark Baker, the Reverend Professor Robert Anderson AM (Chairman) and Father Nigel Wright. The Reverend Dr John Wright and Dr John Foster were nominees of the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Keith Rayner. Father Peter Cross and Sister Shirley Sedawie were nominated by the Roman Catholic Archbishop, Most Rev. Sir Frank Little, and the Reverend Robert Gribben and Dr Dorothy Lee were nominated by the Moderator of the Victorian Synod of the Uniting Church.

Subsequently Father David Wood was appointed to the Committee in lieu of Father Nigel Wright, upon the latter's resignation due to new and additional parish duties.

During the course of their deliberations upon the terms of reference the Special Committee sought the assistance of Dr A. J. Kenny and Father Brendan Byrne SJ as consultants in relation to specific matters of theology of which they were possessed with particular expertise; and the Executive so appointed Dr Kenny and Father Byrne. Rabbi Raymond Apple, who was appointed to the Special Committee during the absence overseas of Rabbi Lubofsky, made valued contributions to many of the researches for and conclusions of the Committee.

An initial report of the Special Committee was received by the Executive at its meeting of 2 December 1993. Due to serious illness throughout 1993, Dr Foster was not a signatory to the report. In accordance with the Executive's resolutions, copies of the initial report were provided for comment to each of the three church leaders who had nominated persons for appointment to the Special Committee. Comments were made by the church leaders.

### **Final Report**

The following is the report of the Special Committee in its final form, incorporating comments by the Church leaders. The Executive is most grateful to all members of the Special Committee for their careful researches and preparation of this report.

The Hon. William Kaye AO, QC  
Chairman, Executive Committee  
Council of Christians and Jews (Victoria)

November 1994

## **Part I**

### **The Texts**

Purpose of the Study

Identifying the Texts

Interpreting the Texts

## **Part II**

### **Analysis of the Texts**

The Trial and Death of Jesus

The 'New' and the 'Old'

The Pharisees

'The Jews' in the Fourth Gospel

Jesus, Judaism and the Torah

Conclusion

Appendix I: Judaism: What Happened Next?

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# **RIGHTLY EXPLAINING THE WORD OF TRUTH**

## **Part I**

### **The Texts**

#### **Purpose of this Study**

1. In recent decades thoughtful Christians have become increasingly sensitive to the sufferings the Jewish people have endured down the ages, culminating in the appalling events of the Holocaust. It is now widely recognized that certain New Testament texts, when not accompanied by appropriate explanations and cautions, have created attitudes towards Jews and Judaism that have led to hostility and, at times, to persecution. While it ought to be evident that any such use of Scripture stands in total opposition to the central Gospel of Christ, the danger of harmful and wounding misrepresentations of texts enjoying authoritative status in the Church remains ever present.

2. The memory of the Holocaust has inspired not only the leadership of Christian churches but insightful scholarship to look again at aspects of Christian teaching and biblical interpretation that have the potential to perpetuate false and damaging perspectives. Resting upon such scholarship, this present document reviews those aspects of Christian origins, as well as certain texts of the New Testament, which require very careful handling in the area of relations with our Jewish brothers and sisters. Its purpose is to promote sensitivity both to past Jewish sufferings and to present Jewish concerns.

## Key Scriptural Texts

3. The texts with which we are concerned are dealt with under these topics:

- The trial and death of Jesus
- The 'new' and the 'old'
- The depiction of the Pharisees
- 'The Jews' in the Fourth Gospel
- Jesus, Judaism and the Torah

## How to Interpret These Texts

4. If it could be stated without any qualification that the Jesus of history and the images of Jesus portrayed in the gospels are one and the same, then the problems we face would be considerably reduced. But that such is not the case is clearly indicated by this statement contained within the authoritative Roman Catholic Church document, *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church* (June 1985).

The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explicating some things in view of the situation of their Churches, and preserving the form of proclamation, but always in such fashion that they told the honest truth about Jesus [Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*), n.19].

Hence it cannot be ruled out that some references hostile or less favourable to the Jews have their historical context in conflicts between the nascent Church and the Jewish communities. Certain controversies reflect Christian-Jewish relations long after the time of Jesus. To establish this is of capital importance if we wish to bring out the meaning of certain Gospel texts for the Christians of today (IV 21 A).

5. This carefully worded statement would find acceptance in the scholarly circles of the mainstream Christian communions. What is being said is this:

(a) The gospels do not provide us with mere biographies of Jesus but they do give us that understanding of Jesus that enables the Christian with full confidence to assert that this Jesus is both Lord and Redeemer.

(b) The Word of God (see n.7 below) comes to us through the words of the author and it is these words that may also express the views, the needs, and the situations in which each gospel developed and within which each emerged in its present canonical form.

(c) Given that the canonical gospels reached their extant form some thirty to seventy years after the time of Jesus, it is understandable that in the light of (b) above, they will reflect, at times, their religious, social and political context.

(d) Very much to the fore in this context was the religion from which the early Church emerged: Judaism. What must be added is that both the early Church and Judaism, in those areas in which they came into contact, were set within the Roman Empire.

6. All of these factors are taken into consideration in the production of these *Guidelines*. However, one very important issue for the Christian preacher and teacher must also receive attention. Put in the form of a question it is this: How, then, in the light of the issues just mentioned, are we to recognise within the gospel accounts (or, for that matter, within the New Testament as a whole) what is the definitive Word of God for the Christian?

7. The answer to that question must take into consideration the following:

## **Part II**

### **Analysis of the Texts**

#### **THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF JESUS**

9. The death of Jesus is of central importance in the Christian understanding of the divine process of redemption. It is not surprising, therefore, that the accounts of the trial and death of Jesus in the four gospels provide us with an unusual degree of common material. Nevertheless, individual traits are also clearly evident. Not the least of these is the disagreement on the identification of those who were responsible for bringing Jesus before Pontius Pilate. It is also of importance that both Luke and John fail to mention any role played by the Jewish Sanhedrin. Nor do the synoptics mention any involvement on the part of the Pharisees (compare John 18:3).

#### **Romans and Death of Jesus**

10. No clear reconstruction of what actually took place and who it was precisely who participated in the events is possible on the basis of the extant evidence. What we have before us in the gospels are not eyewitness accounts. The material with which we have to work has been transmitted over a fairly lengthy period during which, in an atmosphere of apologetic and polemic, the nascent Church attempted to assert its claims within an empire controlled by the Romans and in the face of opposition from a virile Judaism. What is clear is that Jesus was arraigned before the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate, on the charge of sedition against the empire and that he was put to death by the Roman method of crucifixion. The synoptic gospels show that this was carried out by Roman soldiers.

11. Yet, and this is the crux of the matter, history has absolved the Romans and laid the blame for the death of Jesus, not merely on some Jews (say, those religious leaders such as the High Priest who were inclined towards and dependent for their offices upon Rome), but upon all Jews. Nor has this charge of responsibility for the death of the Christian Messiah, expressed often in terms of deicide, been restricted even to the contemporaries of Jesus. It has pursued all Jews, wherever they have lived, down through the centuries.

12. The process of transfer of guilt from Romans to Jews is nowhere better illustrated than in an episode recorded only in Matthew's gospel (27:24-26). There we are given a picture of Pontius Pilate, renowned for his corruption and brutality, observing what is, in fact, a Jewish custom: the washing of hands to remove the taint of guilt (see Deuteronomy 21:1-9). Moreover, he is depicted as meekly submitting to the demands of subject Jews, whom he usually treated with disdain, who took upon themselves voluntarily the responsibility for the Roman-style execution, through the Roman practice of crucifixion, of a prisoner arraigned before him on the Roman charge of sedition.

The proclamation of the imminent kingdom of God, a central feature of Jesus' preaching, would have alarmed the Roman authorities no less than it did the High Priest and his associates. Jewish culpability is heightened by the gospel writer's identification of the participants as "the people as a whole". It is they who cry out in unison, "his blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:25). Appearing where this cry does, in the text of Holy Scripture, it has assumed the status of a divinely authenticated admission on the part of Jews that it was they who were responsible for the death of Jesus. As has been mentioned above, the gospel accounts themselves indicate that the matter is a much more complex one than that.

## **What Killed Jesus?**

13. The public reading of the passion, trial and death narrative, without explanation of some of its intricacies and difficulties, and its highly dramatized character, and the proclamation of it without consideration of the ongoing religious and political context, will perpetuate attitudes which, in the past, have caused great anguish and suffering within the Jewish community.

14. When the death of Jesus is considered, the primary question to be asked is not who killed Jesus but what? One clear response of the Church is that he died for the sins of the world, in accordance with the divine will. Any further response ought not be made without reference to matters such as those referred to above.

## **THE ‘NEW’ AND THE ‘OLD’**

15. Very early in the life of the Church, certainly by the decades of the second century, there arose the notion that the Church had replaced or superseded Israel as the People of God. Such a claim has persisted throughout most of the life of the Church. Seldom has it been called into question, and then mainly in recent times.

## **God is Faithful to His Covenant**

16. Those who have adopted this position have done so on the basis of the interpretation of certain New Testament texts. However, it is not the sole possibility so far as the witness of the New Testament is concerned. In Romans 9.11 Paul struggles with the issue of God’s continuing relationship with that part of his own people Israel that has not come to faith in Jesus as the Christ. The conclusion of a long and complex discussion is that, whatever the human response may be, God’s own faithfulness and integrity forbid the annulment of his divinely instituted covenant with Israel (“the divine filiation, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises,” Romans 9.4), and insists that the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11.28-29), as was pointed out by John Paul II at Mainz in Germany in 1980.

Paul specifically warns Christians of non-Jewish origin against despising those who belong to the stock of their forefathers in the faith and reminds them that they themselves are the 'wild olive' grafted on to the original stock, from which they draw nourishment and life (Romans 11.16-24). Finally, he speaks of a 'mystery' whereby that part of the original stock that as yet does not believe in Christ will find a way to salvation: "and so all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11.26).

### **A More Inclusive Covenant**

Paul's explanation at this point is cryptic and elusive: no clear scenario outlining time or mode of this 'salvation' is provided. What is central and truly significant, however, is the presupposition that the Jewish people retain their distinct identity in the sight of God and live within the continuing power of the ancient promises. There is no suggestion – in fact Paul implicitly excludes any such – that the Christian Church has simply 'replaced' Israel in the scheme of salvation. Indeed, such a 'replacement' would hardly be compatible with Paul's central call to the Christian community at Rome to place their faith in a God whose faithfulness, power and eternal design triumph in the face of human failure and sin. Paul's final vision is not that the covenant with Israel has been abolished but that, in the light of Christ, it is seen to be more inclusive (of the 'nations' of the world) than had previously been grasped.

17. The New Testament, it is true, consistently attributes a unique saving role to the person of Jesus Christ. No dialogue between Christians and Jews can ignore or play down this evident truth. However, Christians must realize that one New Testament writer (Paul of Tarsus), who held most firmly to it also insisted upon the abiding validity of God's promise to Israel. There is undoubtedly a tension here. But it is a tension which Paul was prepared to live with and not seek to resolve in a facile way by simply eliminating the claim for Israel in favour of that made for Christ. Outstanding theologian as he was (that is, concerned primarily for the honour and status of God), he saw clearly that simply to dismiss Israel would be to impugn the faithfulness and reliability of God.

18. Whether the kind of 'supersessionism' - that is, the idea that the Christian Church has completely replaced Israel - to be found in later Christian teaching (for example, the early Fathers of the Church), can be detected already in the New Testament is arguable. At most, it could be said that such supersessionism would be the negative implication of the constant assertion of Jesus Christ as sole mediator.

However, there are New Testament texts that could and did provide a basis for the strictly supersessionist teaching that arose at a later period (see Matthew 21.33-46; Mark 12.1-12; Luke 20.9-19; 23.28-36; 17.24-25; 13.28-29; 21.20-24; John 1.17; Acts 7.51-53; 2 Corinthians 3.12-15; Hebrews 8.13). Each of these and similar texts need to be carefully examined in their own context - both literary and historical - and, in particular, in the light of contingent facts such as (a) the animosity that arose between Judaism and the nascent Church, (b) the claim of Jewish culpability for the death of Jesus, and the emotive effect of such a charge, and (c) most important of all, the fact that the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple appeared to be and could be interpreted as the unequivocal sign of the divine judgment upon Israel.

## THE PHARISEES

19. In the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (1984 corrected edition) there is this entry under 'Pharisee': "1. (a group) .. distinguished .. by their pretensions to superior sanctity. 2. A person of this disposition; a formalist; a hypocrite". *Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* (Penguin edition, 1981 reprint) lists 'pharisaical' as synonymous with 'hypocritical' and 'sanctimonious'. Thus has the name of a Jewish religious group, active at the time of Jesus, entered into the English language. No religious group has been subjected to more adverse criticism nor been more the victim of artless caricature than have the Pharisees. How did this occur and why?



## **Experts in the Torah**

20. First, who were the Pharisees? Their origin goes back at least to the second century BCE (Before the Common Era), according to the later historian Josephus. They were a group, mainly of lay people, who were expert in their understanding and teaching of the Torah (law of Moses as a way of life) and, according to Josephus (first century of the Common Era), enjoyed the support of the Jewish people in general. They preserved and transmitted in oral form a tradition of interpreting Torah in such a way as to allow it to remain a way of life for new generations in changing circumstances. Indeed, it was the Pharisees who preserved and safeguarded Judaism. It was they who provided the leadership at Yavneh and successive centres of Jewish religious life that enabled Judaism to redefine itself and engage in religious reconstruction after Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, in the year 70 of the Common Era. It was the rabbis, the successors of the Pharisees, who provided opposition to the fledgling Church, especially during the period in which the gospels were being developed and composed.

## **Differences among Pharisees**

21. The gospels and the Acts of the Apostles speak of considerable conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. It is unlikely that all Pharisees opposed Jesus and the early Church; quite the contrary, but there is strong evidence to suggest that there were divisions. The very closeness of some of Jesus' own teachings to those of the Pharisees may account for some sharp differences of opinion. Others were due, no doubt, to fundamental disagreements. Only a close reading of the relevant texts can clarify these matters.

22. One means of close reading of the text is through the comparison of the synoptic parallel accounts. The addition of certain words in one account, or the nuanced expression in another, may provide some indication of the individual evangelist's emphasis, as well as the context from which the gospels emerged. For example, note how the Pharisees are very much to the fore in certain Matthaean accounts (compare Mark 3.22-30 and Matthew 12.22-33; Mark 12.13-17 and Matthew 22.15-22; Mark 12.28-34 and Matthew 22.34-40; Mark 12.34-37a and Matthew 21.41-46). The differences may appear to be minor but, in fact, they are quite significant. It is in the gospel of Matthew that we find the most sustained criticism of the Pharisees, and it is this gospel, more than any other, that has been used by the dictionary compilers, particularly chapter 23.

23. But this is not the whole of the story so far as the New Testament's depiction of Pharisees is concerned. On three occasions, as recorded in Luke's gospel, Jesus is the guest of a Pharisee (Luke 7.36-50; 11.37-41; 14.1-24). Also in the same gospel there is a story which tells of Pharisaic support of Jesus when certain of their number warn him of an impending threat to his life from Herod (Luke 13.31). The Acts of the Apostles informs us of the Pharisee Gamaliel's tolerant and sympathetic attitude to the early Church (Acts 5.34-39). This would indicate that we need to read the evidence carefully, bearing in mind that the paucity of information within our reach may point to a relationship that is far more complex even than that which we have suggested.

24. What is clear beyond question is that Jesus was forthrightly critical of any attitude that was empty and merely formal. But in this he had the full weight of the Hebrew scriptures on his side and took up a position similar to that of his near contemporary, the great Pharisaic teacher, Hillel, whose influence permeated the ranks of his students as well as those of the later rabbis.

25. Nevertheless, there are problem texts in this area. If we could disengage the first century of the Common Era Pharisees from the ensuing history then perhaps the difficulties would disappear. But we cannot do that. The Pharisees, as the pre-eminent religious leaders of those times, and as the founders of Rabbinic or Traditional Judaism, are not only remembered by Jewish women and men today but are recalled with great affection. Some suggestions for dealing with this issue are:

(a) We cannot just arbitrarily alter the text of scripture but we may, when it is appropriate, introduce the public reading with a brief explanation (cf. [c] below).

(b) In the classroom it is possible to give longer treatment to the topic, taking up such issues as the diversity within first-century Judaism and the tensions that may arise quite naturally as a result of 'in-house' differences.

c) At appropriate times, when discussing or explaining a text, provided the substance is preserved, phrases open to misinterpretation such as 'the Pharisees', 'the Jews' could be rendered in a way less likely to cause prejudice. Expressions such as 'some religious leaders' or 'the Jewish leaders' or 'some citizens of Jerusalem' could be used.

## **'THE JEWS' IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

26. The gospel of John makes frequent use of the expression 'the Jews', in all some seventy-one times. In the vast majority of these occurrences it is used of the opponents of Jesus and these are often clearly identified as the Pharisees. If the context in which the Fourth Gospel was written, i.e. toward the end of the first century of the Common Era, is not taken into account, the gospel itself may be readily interpreted in an anti-Jewish sense. That this has happened within the Church, even from the early years of its existence, is beyond question.

27. A central influence in the composition of the Fourth Gospel was the break with the Synagogue reflected most sharply in such texts as John 9:22, 34 and 12:42. To some extent the breach is anticipated in Mark 13:9-11 (and parallels), but in John the presentation is intensified. This tense relationship between local church and local synagogue reaches its zenith in the sharp encounter recorded in John 8:31-47 and in the Fourth Gospel's passion narrative (see John 19:14-16, especially v.16). Without question both of these Johannine passages have been used in ways that have caused great distress and suffering. How, then, are we to approach this matter in such a way as to avoid depicting Jews as blind, recalcitrant and vengeful opponents of Jesus?

### **No Distinction Between Jews**

28. No one explanation of the use of the epithet 'the Jews' is likely to suit every occurrence of it, not even where it is used in a pejorative sense. However, these two points may offer some guidance when dealing with this matter:

(a) At the time when the Fourth Gospel reached its existing form, probably late in the first century of the Common Era, it no longer made sense to distinguish one Jewish group from another. The erstwhile opponents of Jesus, whether they were Pharisees, Sadducees or Herodians, could now simply be described as 'the Jews'.

(b) The forthright language that we encounter in the Fourth Gospel, not least the frequent occurrence of the expressions 'the Jews' in a polemical context, was part of the rhetoric of the times. It does not imply an abiding evaluation of the Jewish people and ought not be understood as such.

29. Within the classroom there will be an opportunity for the above points to receive attention. It should not be overlooked that, so long as there is a continuing and identifiable group of people who are Jews, the problem created by the polemical use of the expression 'the Jews' in the Fourth Gospel will remain.

30. While the classroom situation offers an opportunity to speak at length about the issue, this is not the case when it comes to the more public reading of biblical passages. The constant reiteration of 'the Jews'.. 'the Jews', in what is often a decidedly negative sense, may readily engender attitudes which run counter to a proper understanding of the Gospel. An explanation which takes up points similar to those set out above will at least draw attention to the fact that there is an issue here that has to be addressed; that it may not be simply left without comment.

31. Whatever else is said, either by way of introduction or by later explanation, it should be made clear that the expression 'the Jews' cannot possibly be made to refer to all Jews living at that time (in Judea, Galilee and the huge diaspora), let alone all Jews of all time. Sensitive handling of this matter will be required so that all Jews of whatever time are not simply identified as lacking faith or as standing in opposition to Jesus.

## **JESUS, JUDAISM AND THE TORAH**

32. In keeping with this issue the following points need to be kept in mind:

(a) Jesus was a Jew and cannot be understood apart from the Judaism of his time.

(b) Judaism, like any other religion, has to be understood in its own terms and not in those imposed upon it.

(c) Torah is a complex term and may not be simply equated with Law. Any suggestion that it stands over and against the grace of God fails to see it in its true covenantal context.

(d) There developed within Judaism, under the leadership of the Pharisees, the concept of the Oral Torah by means of which the Written Torah of the Hebrew Bible (i.e. the Pentateuch) was interpreted in such a way as to meet the needs of changed times and changing circumstances (see Appendix I).

33. What should be kept in mind is that just as Christianity moved beyond its Old Testament in its formulation of a New Testament, so too Judaism moved beyond its Hebrew Scriptures. Christian scholars, in the main, are now becoming more and more aware that a knowledge of the Mishnah, the Talmuds (Babylonian and Jerusalem) and the Midrash is essential for a sound appreciation of first century and later Judaism. Like Christianity, Judaism was undergoing development at that time, and the complex and developing relationship between the two movements must always be given consideration.

### **Jesus within Judaism**

34. Jesus stood firmly within Judaism, not outside it. The texts which indicate this may be relatively few in number, but the fact that they are there suggests how crucial they are in our understanding of Jesus' relationship to the religion into which he was born and in which he was nurtured.

The gospels present him as one who attended the Synagogue (Mark 1.21, 6.2; Luke 4.16), made the pilgrimage to the Jerusalem Temple on festal occasions (Mark 11:15; John 5:1; 7:10) and celebrated Passover (Mark 14:15-16). The gospel of Matthew presents Jesus' relationship to the Torah in a very positive light. Most striking is Matthew 5:17-20, where Jesus insists that he has come not to abolish the law but to bring it to fulfilment. The 'fulfilment of the law' envisaged here appears to include even the ritual requirements (cf. e.g. Matthew 23:23, 26), but Matthew also makes clear that justice, mercy, faith and, above all, love are the central qualities of the law.

Elsewhere in the gospels Jesus is often presented as contesting obligations imposed in the name of the Law (e.g. Matthew 12.1-8; Mark 2.23-28; Matthew 12.9-14; Mark 3.1-6; Luke 13.10-17). But even here the issue is not the efficacy of the Torah as such but that of interpretation in certain circumstances.

## **A New Approach**

It seems indisputable that Jesus adopted a radically fresh stance in matters of Sabbath observance, ritual cleanliness, table-fellowship and association with those generally regarded as sinners. His teaching and action in these areas was an essential part of his proclamation of the Kingdom. Nonetheless, it cannot be said that his aim is simply to overthrow these key features of Jewish religion. Had this been so, it is difficult to understand how matters such as Sabbath observance, circumcision and dietary laws remained contentious issues in the later Church (Acts 15.1-11, Galatians 2.1-14)

35. With Jesus the emphasis is always upon the internal attitude. In this he reflects Samuel's words to Saul (1st Book of Samuel 15.22-23), that obedience is preferable to sacrifice. But this concentration upon the internal is by no means foreign to the Judaism of Jesus' time and later. The Golden Rule of Matthew 7.12 was anticipated by the great Pharisaic sage, Hillel, with this statement:

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole of the Torah. The remainder is interpretation.

Jesus' reduction of the Torah to certain basic principles such as love of God (Deuteronomy 6.5) and love of neighbour (Leviticus 19.18, 34) reflects a common practice of the Jewish sages; for example, Rabbi Akiba in the early second century of the Common Era. A little later Rabbi Simlai found the essence of the Torah in Amos 5.4: "Seek me and live". A contemporary, Rabbi Nahman, found it in Habakkuk 2.4: "the righteous live by their faith". The above examples of common attitudes should warn us against making facile comparisons between Judaism and Christianity whether in the classroom or in the pulpit.

## Correcting Misrepresentations of Judaism

36. The following particular points can be made by way of correction of some common misrepresentations of Judaism:

(a) In the 'Antitheses' in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5. 17-47) there is no abrogation of the Torah, not even in part. The position adopted by the evangelist Matthew is what the Sages called "the fencing of the Torah". The individual is safeguarded from breaking the scriptural commandment by being faced with a more rigorous demand. It thus serves as a protection. Jesus is not attacking the Torah: he is confirming its importance, while at the same time insisting upon the centrality of love, mercy and generosity.

(b) One could perhaps infer from Matthew 5.43 that hatred of one's enemy has biblical or Jewish sanction. It is true that the writings of one group within Judaism, the community of Qumran, do give some evidence of such an attitude. But it is by no means characteristic of Judaism as such nor is it to be found in Hebrew Scriptures.

(c) Jesus' healing on the Sabbath (Mark 3.1-6 and parallels) is not presented by the gospels as a breach of the commandment in the Decalogue (Exodus 20.8-11, and Deuteronomy 5.12-15), but as an interpretation of the meaning of the Sabbath within the community of faith.

(d) Washing of the hands (Matthew 15.1-20, Mark 7.1-23) is required in the Hebrew Scriptures only of priests. The extension of the requirement to others came after the time of Jesus. Jesus is not opposing any biblical injunction in this regard.

(e) The commonly stated view that the principle of "an eye for an eye" (Matthew 5.38) is a fundamental element of Judaism, standing in stark contrast to a Christian emphasis upon forgiveness, is incorrect. The 'law of retaliation' (*lex talionis*) dates from primitive times when there was no judicial system. Its purpose was to place a limit upon the degree of retaliation. It was later replaced by a monetary penalty.



The above comments (and they are a selection only) remind us of how easy it is to accept and perpetuate in teaching and preaching interpretations and attitudes which are based not upon careful exegesis and knowledge of the period but upon unexamined assumptions.

## CONCLUSION

37. The purpose in preparing these *Guidelines* has been a limited one. They do not purport to be descriptive of either Christianity or Judaism. Nor are they meant to cover the field of what is referred to as 'Christian and Jewish relations'. The *Guidelines*' main concern is with certain New Testament texts which, in a great deal of Christian preaching and teaching down through the centuries, have been used and interpreted in a way that has been damaging to Judaism.

38. Necessarily, these *Guidelines* have had to be presented in a form much briefer than the importance of the issue demands. To overcome this, at least to some extent, two appendices have been attached. They may prove to be useful adjuncts to the *Guidelines*, but the prime requisites, so far as this issue is concerned, are a willingness to learn and a sensitivity in attitude.

9 November 1994

## **Appendix I**

### **Judaism: What Happened Next?**

At some time between the years 29 and 36 Jesus died beneath the ironic and menacing multi-lingual inscription 'the King of the Jews'. We know something about his murderer. The prefect Pontius Pilate arrived in Judea in the year 26 and quickly demonstrated that his Jewish subjects would be treated with cruelty and contempt.

#### **Pilate's Rule**

Pilate ignored the religious status quo that allowed Jerusalem to be free of pagan images. From his palace in coastal Caesarea he commanded his soldiers to carry their legion's standards and shields through the streets of Jerusalem, despite the fact that they bore the face of the Emperor. He robbed the Temple Treasury to pay for the aqueducts that brought water into Jerusalem, murdered those who demonstrated against him and boldly imprinted pagan religious symbols on his coins, knowing that this could cause offence and confusion.

Pilate's aggression extended beyond the Jews. On Mt Gerizim he massacred Samaritans who had gathered in hopeful excitement to salute a would-be Messiah. Pilate returned to Rome in the year 37 to face serious charges of maladministration and was saved only by the sudden death of the Emperor Tiberius Augustus and the accession of the deranged Caligula. Judea and the millions of Jews in the diaspora faced tragic decades of turmoil that led to the first full scale ill-fated rebellion against Rome in the year 66.

#### **New Discoveries & Ancient Myths**

In the past three decades archaeology has opened windows into the life of the Jewish people in the first centuries of the Common Era. These developments include the restoration of the ancient fortresses of Massada and Herodian and the 1968 discovery of the bones of a 26-year-old Jerusalemite, who had been crucified with a nail and wood still attached to his skeleton.

Pilgrims can now climb the ancient steps into the Temple which Jesus must have walked. The development of a park in Jerusalem has revealed the inscribed ossuary and family grave of the High Priest Caiaphas. A major excavation of the city of Sepphoris (Zippori), which lies just five kilometres north of Nazareth, has introduced the historian to the Galilean urban environment of two thousand years ago. Archaeology has also revealed beautiful Galilean synagogues and the remains of the church built around the house of St Peter at Capernaum. An unseasonable drought resulted in the recovery of an intact 2,000-year-old fishing boat that lay just beyond the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Excavations south and west of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem have revealed the design, the gates and the appearance of the place Jesus called 'my Father's House'. The thousands of scroll fragments and artifacts found in the crevices and caves around the Dead Sea have become a complicated and demanding field of independent scholarship that has brought Jewish and Christian scholars together in a common quest.

As our knowledge of the vital events of first and second century Judaism grows we can now confront some ancient historical myths. Forty years elapsed between the death of Jesus and the Roman destruction of the Temple. Those decades were filled with tumult and discontent in Judea and we now understand that the early Church must have been deeply affected by the approaching storm. For centuries the legend of 'the wandering Jew' held that the destruction of the Temple brought about the exile of the Jewish People. We now understand that long before the days of Jesus more Jews lived outside the Land of Israel than within it. Most Christians know about the Jewish centres in Asia Minor from the travels of St Paul. There were major Jewish communities in Egypt and North Africa, and the ancient Jewish community in Mesopotamia remained in close touch with the Jews of Judea and Galilee. However, the Jews constituted a major segment of the population within the Land of Israel for the first six hundred years of the Common Era. During this time Judaism did not stand still. It was forced to endure persecution and discrimination. Judaism was also confronted by the rise of Christianity, its sister religion, that cherished the same Scriptures but dealt with them differently. Out of these early centuries major Jewish religious books, biblical

translations and commentaries, law codes and collections of legend emerged.

## **Roman Oppression**

The Jews rebelled against Rome for a second time in the year 132. It was an act of political desperation and must have been motivated by deep eschatological longings. Almost miraculously, the military leader, Shimon bar Kochba, held out against the Romans for three years and a desperate populace hailed Bar Kochba as the Messiah. As a consequence of the Bar Kochba rebellion the Romans banned the practice of Judaism. Circumcision was forbidden and the study of the Torah was made an offence worthy of death. Though the bans were later lifted, the aftermath of this Hadrianic persecution on the course of Jewish history was devastating. These two disastrous rebellions against Rome must have eliminated the Ebionite Jerusalem Church and its Jewish practices from the subsequent history of Christianity. Despite all odds Judaism remained an active missionary religion until the Christian conversion of the Roman Empire.

We know that the young Christian Church parted company with Judaism some time between the year 100 and the Bar Kochba rebellion. Traces of these historic links remain within the New Testament, in the use of Midrash, in textual discussion of legal matters concerning divorce and the observance of the Sabbath, and in the merging liturgy of the Church.

With the collapse of the Bar Kochba rebellion the Romans renamed Jerusalem Aelia Capitolina (Aelia commemorates the Emperor Hadrian's family name and Capitolina, the god Jupiter Capitolinus) and Judea was to be called 'Syria-Palaestina', recalling the Philistines who had vanished from history a thousand years before. It is therefore tendentious and inaccurate to describe by the name 'Palestine' the land that Jesus knew. Roman control of Judea was absolutely vital for the integrity of the Empire. Judea was (and still is) the land bridge linking Asia Minor with Europe and Africa. Its coast controls the Eastern Mediterranean. Until its repeated devastation by war and neglect its hills and valleys were fertile and highly productive. The western edge of the Parthian Empire lay

within a few kilometres east of the River Jordan and the success of the Jewish rebellion would have cut the Roman Empire in two. The war was therefore not the foolhardy venture that it may now seem, given the benefit of hindsight. In the first century at least one-tenth of the population of the Roman Empire was Jewish or sympathetic to Judaism. The Temple of Jerusalem was one of the wonders of the ancient world. Millions of Jews throughout the Empire paid an annual tax to maintain the Temple and all would have hoped to visit Jerusalem on pilgrimage at least once in their life. There is no doubt that the Judean rebellion placed the Empire itself in jeopardy.

### A New Era

With the destruction of the Temple the Jewish people entered a new era. The development of the synagogue took the place of the Temple in Jerusalem. The title 'rabbi' was introduced in order to designate a new authority in which the teachers of tradition replaced the ancient priestly hierarchy. Prayer took the place of the Temple and its sacrificial cult and the daily services of the synagogue were given the names of the sacrifices. The Jewish sectarian movements such as Zealots, Sadduceans and Essenes vanished. Only the Pharisees, the interpreters of the tradition of the Oral and Written Torah, survived. The centre of the Jewish world literally shifted. It moved first to Yavneh and to the academy to the south west of Jerusalem, then to Galilee and, finally, to Babylonia which was beyond the reach of Rome. Hellenistic-Judaism, divorced from its Hebrew sources, and persecuted by the Romans, ceased to be a creative part of the evolving Jewish religious civilisation.

In the first years of the third century, Judah the Prince, the head of the academy of Galilee, edited the Mishnah, a massive six-volume collection of rabbinic tradition, law and legend that spanned four centuries of accumulated wisdom and which added to the process of Biblical legislation. The Mishnah would, in turn, become the basis for the extended debates that constitute the Talmud.

With the rise of Christianity the open teaching of the Biblical text became fraught with danger. The early sermons of the synagogue were preserved in the Midrash which often deals with the

theological issues between the two faiths in a discreet but thoughtful manner. The extensive literature generated by rabbinic Judaism in those early centuries often includes ancient material.

The tractate Pirke Avot, a section of the Mishnah, preserves the teaching of Hillel, who was one of the most famous teachers of the first century. Hillel taught:

Be one of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace like him and pursuing peace like him, loving your fellow human beings and bringing them nearer to the Torah.

A fool cannot fear sin. An ignorant person cannot be pious. A bashful person cannot learn nor an impatient person teach.

A name made great is a name destroyed. He who does not increase his knowledge decreases it. He who makes worldly use of the crown of the Torah shall perish.

If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, when?

Do not separate yourself from the community. Do not trust yourself until the day of your death. Do not judge your fellow until you are come into his place. Never say 'When I have leisure I shall study'. Perhaps you will never have leisure!

A more comprehensive treatment of this period is to be found in Peter Connolly, *Living in the Time of Jesus of Nazareth*, published by Steinmatzky (P.O. Box Bnai Brak 1444, Israel). It is a brilliant, clear and illuminating text book for middle high school students.

John S. Levi (Rabbi)

## Appendix II

### Annotated Bibliography

This bibliography is by no means exhaustive. It is limited, in the main, to those works whose authors exhibit some understanding of the types of issues raised in the *Guidelines* and who have attended to them.

The reader's attention is drawn, in particular, to the section entitled 'Recent Church Statement on Jewish and Christian Relations'. These documents, which emanate from individual churches, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, as well as from ecumenical bodies, suggest, by their world-wide provenance, that matters dealt with in the *Guidelines* are of the utmost importance.

The final section refers the reader to more extensive biographies than the one presented here. The one compiled by Eugene Fisher is without parallel.

#### Jesus, Judaism and Torah

Charlesworth, James H., *Jesus within Judaism. New Light from Exciting Archaeological Discoveries*, New York: Doubleday, 1988.

Sub-titles like this are off-putting and often misleading. This is another important contribution to 'Jesus of history' research and few scholars are better equipped than Charlesworth to introduce the reader to the raw material of that research. There is an introductory chapter on the scholarly work in this area in the eighties. This is followed by overviews of what may be learnt from the Old Testament, Pseudepigraphia, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Codices and Josephus. There is an Annotated Bibliography of works published since 1980.

Charlesworth James H. (ed.), *Jesus' Jewishness. Exploring the Place of Jesus in Early Judaism*, New York: Crossroad, 1991.

This work contains essays by both Jewish and Christian scholars, among them, Geza Vermes ('Jesus the Jew'), John P. Meier ('Reflections on Jesus-of-History research today'), Ellis Rivkin ('What Crucified Jesus?'), and Hans Kung ('Christianity and Judaism'). This is merely a sample of the richness of this volume.

Lee Bernard J., *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus. Retrieving the Jewish Origins of Christianity*, New York: Paulist Press, 1988.

The author is a systematic/philosophical theologian who has put his mind to the question of the relatedness of Jesus to the Judaism into which he was born and which he continued to cherish throughout his life. Fr Lee sees Jesus essentially as 'the anointed eschatological prophet'. This understanding, while putting at risk many traditional Christian interpretations, does offer the possibility of a non-supersessionist Christology.

Sanders E.P., *Jesus and Judaism*, London: SCM Press, 1985.

Sanders' intention is to place Jesus firmly within the Judaism of his day; to determine what it is that may confidently be said of Jesus in light of the available evidence; to discern what it was that constituted the intention and programme of Jesus. For Sanders there must be a causal connection between the last two. These are all central issues in 'Jesus research' and this contribution is essential reading.

Sanders E.P., *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah. Five Studies*, London/Philadelphia: SCM Press/Trinity Press International, 1990. No non-Jewish scholar, certainly in the English-speaking world, is as conversant with the relevant Rabbinic literature as is E.P. Sanders. Indeed, very few Christian New Testament scholars evince any sound knowledge of Judaism of the first-century of the Common Era, let alone expertise in Rabbinic writings. Of particular importance in this contribution of Sanders is the opening chapter, 'The Synoptic Jesus and the Law: conflicts and agreement in comparison with other contemporary debates'. By placing the issue of Jesus' attitude to the Torah in the context of the 'other contemporary debates', i.e. on Torah interpretation and practice, Sanders is able to make a distinction between those matters where Jesus' disagreement with his contemporaries was of consequence and those where it was not. This is essential reading, not least for scholars.



Vermes Geza, *Jesus the Jew. A Historian's Reading of the Gospels*, London: Fontana/Collins, 1976.

Vermes is determined that it is possible to gain insights into the Jesus of history if all the materials available to the historian are utilized. Christian readers may wish to say something more about Jesus than they are presented with in this learned work by the Oxford Jewish scholar, Geza Vermes, but will appreciate the contribution that he has made to this burgeoning part of New Testament (and related) studies.

### **The Trial and Death of Jesus**

Cohn Haim, *The Trial and Death of Jesus*, New York: KTAV, 1977. In this exhaustive work by a former Justice of the Supreme Court of Israel, there is an analysis of both the Jewish and the Roman legal material that bears on the issue. Cohn sees no evidence to support the claim that Jesus was brought before a formal Jewish court. Though difficult to procure, this book is essential reading for anyone who wishes to analyse what it was that did happen and who it was that were responsible.

Rivkin Ellis, *What Crucified Jesus?*, London: SCM Press, 1984. No charge against Jews has had a more disastrous effect than that which accuses them of being 'Christ-killers' and/or 'deicides'. Who killed Jesus is not the question, says Rivkin, but rather what was responsible. He answers this in terms of 'the Roman imperial system'. The procurator was appointed by the Roman Emperor; the High Priest was an appointee of the procurator and it was he who convened the court of trial. Within the space of 80 pages Rivkin pursues this divisive issue eruditely and dispassionately.

Rowland Christopher, *Christian Origins. An Account of the Setting and Character of the Most Important Messianic Sect in Judaism*, London: SPCK, 1985.

The section on 'The arrest and trial of Jesus' is a small part only of this informative book (11 pages of 327). But it raises the central issue of how to read and interpret the varying gospel accounts which contain material written from a later point of view to meet changed circumstances.

## The Pharisees

Rivkin Ellis, *The Hidden Revolution. The Pharisees' Search for the Kingdom Within*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1978.

This is a necessary corrective to the long transmitted and near intransigent caricature of the Pharisees which has stemmed from an uncritical reading of the New Testament. Rivkin analyses evidence for the Pharisees in the New Testament, the works of Josephus (Jewish historian of the first century of the Common Era) and the Rabbinic literature.

Schurer Emil, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, Vols. I, II and III, 1 & 2, revised and edited by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar and others, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973-1987.

Originally published in 1885 this monumental work, on what the author and his contemporaries conceived to be Spätjudentum (Late Judaism), was seen as that hitherto noted religion's epitaph. The anti-Judaistic, if not anti-Jew bias, has been removed and the whole work thoroughly revised and updated by leading scholars in the field. There is an invaluable Index in III.2. The section on the Pharisees is in Volume II, pages 381-403. The 'New Schurer' is an indispensable tool for any serious student of the period.

## Supersessionism

Callan Terrance, *Forgetting the root. The Emergence of Christianity from Judaism*, New York: Paulist Press, 1986.

Christianity was born within Judaism. How it emerged from it and finally, and irrevocably, broke with it is a long and complex story. Terrance Callan sees the process as hinging on two crucial points, namely: “first, the church’s decision that Gentile Christians need not keep the Jewish law; and second, the eventual decline of Jewish membership within the church”. This is a small book full of scholarly information and interpretation.

McGarry Michael B., *Christology after Auschwitz*, New York: Paulist Press, 1977.

McGarry sees the “main condition for fruitful dialogue” as the Christian repudiation of the supersessionist theory, i.e. that the mission of the Jewish people has been taken over by the Church. He subjects Vatican statements to scrutiny in the light of this position. Though written prior to Notes.. (1985) this is still a valuable contribution to the attempt to formulate a Christology that is not at the expense of Judaism.

Siker Jeffrey S., *Disinheriting the Jews. Abraham in Early Christian Controversy*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991.

The figure of Abraham, accepted by both Jews and Christians as the father of faith, is used by Professor Siker to show the way in which the church, step by step, moved away from its initial Jewish setting. Particularly instructive is the closing chapter, “From Gentile inclusion to Jewish exclusion”.

## Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism

Cohn-Sherbok Dan, *The Crucified Jew. Twenty Centuries of Christian Anti-semitism*, London: Harper/Collins 1992.

A sensitive and informed reading of the history of the church in its western European setting will dispel any doubts about the veracity of the sub-title of this important scholarly survey of the topic. This is the most exhaustive one-volume treatment of the nature, rise and development of antisemitism.

Flannery Edward H., *The Anguish of the Jews. Twenty-three Centuries of Antisemitism* (revised and updated), New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

First published in 1964 and now thoroughly revised and updated, this is a seminal work. Father Flannery writes of antisemitism as “a tragedy in which Jesus participates, crucified again in the person of His people at the hands of many baptised in His name”. So far as Christians and the churches are concerned this book is hard-hitting, precisely because it needs to be. Nothing less than a ‘change of heart’ (Flannery) is necessary.

Klein Charlotte, *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978.

A generation or two of Christian priests, ministers and educators has been influenced by the work of such leading European (mainly German) scholars as Dibelius, Schurer, Grundmann, Bultmann, Bornkamm, Noth, Jeremias and von Balthasar. In this work the late Sister Charlotte Klein NDS pinpoints those places where their writings evince clearly misleading and damaging statements on Judaism and Jews. These were made in ignorance, often from bias, and have been absorbed, perpetuated and promulgated. Fortunately, Christian theological scholarship is becoming aware of these distortions but the process needs to be expedited.

## General New Testament Studies

Beck Norman A., *Mature Christianity. The Recognition and Repudiation of the Anti-Jewish Polemic of the New Testament*, London: Susquehanna University/Associated University Press, 1985.

In this important work a noted American Lutheran biblical scholar calls for a cessation to the use of the New Testament which fails to treat seriously the context in which it arose. It is compulsory reading if this issue is to be grappled with seriously.

Charlesworth James H., *Jews and Christians. Exploring the Past, Present and Future*, New York: Crossroad, 1990.

Each paper (with one exception) in this collection was delivered at a gathering of scholars in Philadelphia in May 1987 and is accompanied by discussion. Contributors include J.C. Beker ("New Testament view of Judaism"), D Moody Smith ("Judaism and the Gospel of John"), Hans J. Hillerbrand ("Martin Luther and the Jews"), and Robert T. Osborn ("The Christian blasphemy: A non-Jewish Jesus"). The volume contains some of the best available scholarly work on topics central to Jewish-Christian relations.

Kingsbury Jack Dean, *Conflict in Luke. Jesus, Authorities, Disciples*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1991.

A leading specialist in synoptic gospels studies here presents a literary or narrative approach to Luke. The gospel is a story, central to which, of course, is Jesus. But intertwined with this are the stories of conflict with the Jewish authorities and the (Jewish) disciples. The major conflict is with Israel, the religious authorities, at the heart of which is the issue of authority. Towards the end of the gospel this conflict intensifies to the point where Jesus is presented as 'taking over' the Temple for the purpose of his teaching. Meanwhile the authorities plot his death. The reading of Kingsbury's work is enhanced if this statement of his is borne in mind: "... Luke tends to stereotype [the authorities] as a single group, and his portrait of them is strongly polemical" (p.105).

Richardson Peter (ed.), *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*, Vol. 1, *Paul and the Gospels*, Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1986.

Wilson Stephen G., *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity*, Vol.2, *Separation and Polemic*, Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1986.

These two volumes contain papers delivered in a series of seminars on 'Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity' under the auspices of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies. Volume 1 contains articles on the state of the question (William Klassen), Paul and the Law in Galatians 2-3 (Lloyd Gaston), the trial of Jesus (C.P. Anderson), anti-Judaism and the passion narrative in Luke-Acts (Gaston), and in the Fourth Gospel (David Granshaw), among others. Volume 2 takes up issues such as anti-Judaism in Hebrews (Klassen), Marcion and the Jews (Stephen Wilson) and Judaism, Christianity and Gnosticism (Alan P. Segal). It concludes with Gaston's 'Retrospect' which singles out the main topics and attempts to summarize the findings on each.

Sanders E., *Paul and Palestinian Judaism. A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, London: SCM Press, 1977.

Early in this work Sanders takes to task those influential scholars, among them Bossuet, Schurer, Bultmann, Conzelmann and their heirs, who have received uncritically and passed on to their students and readers a view of Judaism which sees it "as a religion of legalistic works-righteousness". This is followed by an examination of the Tannaitic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls and certain Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphical writings (namely, 1 Enoch, Jubilees, the Psalms of Solomon and IV Ezra), which provide an understanding of Judaism in terms of what Sanders calls "covenantal nomism", in which "the gift and demand of God were kept in a healthy relationship with each other, i.e. not as in the Christian theological caricature". The second section of the book is devoted to a study of Paul and an examination of where and why his view and that of Judaism differed.

Sanders Jack T., *The Jews in Luke-Acts*, London: SCM Press, 1987. On the question of the New Testament presentation of the Jews and Judaism attention has mainly centred upon the Fourth Gospel and that of Matthew. It has often been assumed that Luke requires no such specific examination. In this volume Sanders clearly indicates that such is not the case. Luke's presentation of the Pharisees is much more nuanced than that of Matthew and the motive that lies behind that must be scrutinized. Sanders understands the anti-Jewish polemic in Luke-Acts as arising not from the experience of Jewish persecution which he sees, in whatever form it took, as belonging to a time prior to Luke. With Etienne Trocme (though not without certain differences) he holds that the polemic arises over the issue of the inclusion of the Gentiles. This arouses the ire of non-Christian Jews and leads to a display of hypocrisy on the part of the Christian Jews. Both are attacked by Luke for Christianity, though originating in Judaism, is now a Gentile religion.

Stanton Graham N., *A Gospel for a New People. Studies in Matthew*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992.

This important work by an authoritative scholar contains several chapters in which issues pertaining to the general area of relationships between Jews and Christians are dealt with, particularly 'The Gospel of Matthew and Judaism' (Five) and 'Aspects of early Christian-Jewish polemic and apologetic' (Ten). Stanton presents Matthew's community (in Syria) as seeing itself as a "beleaguered sect" acting with anger and frustration against continued "Jewish rejection of Christian claims" and "Jewish hostility towards the new community". The process of separation of the two is not yet complete. For specialists in New Testament studies this will continue the debate about methodology, Redaction Criticism, recent advances in literary and rhetorical criticism and the contribution of the social-scientific perspective. For all readers it will raise the issue of why the gospel is in its present form.

Williamson Clark M., and Ronald J. Allen, *Interpreting Difficult Texts. Anti-Judaism and Christian Preaching*, London / Philadelphia: SCM/Trinity Press International, 1989.

The authors acknowledge that anti-Judaism has been a frequent ingredient in Christian preaching and that it can be traced back to

certain texts within the New Testament itself. Failure to come to terms with this perpetuates teaching and attitudes that continue to be harmful to Jews and Judaism. The final chapter is entitled 'Eliminating Anti-Judaism from Worship'. This practical contribution to an age-old problem is essential reading, not least for preachers.

### **Studies in the General Area of Jewish and Christian Relations**

Braybrooke Marcus, *Time to Meet. Towards a Deeper Relationship between Jews and Christians*, London & Philadelphia: SCM Press & Trinity Press International, 1990.

If you have not read anything in the area of Jewish-Christian relations this is where to begin. The former General Secretary of the British Council of Christians and Jews offers commentary on the major church documents followed by perceptive treatment of all the central topics. This is essential reading.

Fisher E.J. & Leon Klenicki, *In Our Time. The Flowering of Jewish-Catholic Dialogue*, New York: Paulist Press, 1990.

Contains the official Vatican statements (1965, 1974 & 1985) with an Appendix showing development and clarification since "Nostra Aetate" (n.4). Of great value is an annotated bibliography of works in the field compiled by Eugene Fisher.

Pawlikowski John T, *What are they saying about Christian-Jewish relations?* New York: Paulist Press, 1980.

No one is better equipped to answer the question posed by the title than Fr John Pawlikowski. All the major issues are there, and treated with the author's accustomed perceptiveness, though the material now needs to be brought up to date. An annotated bibliography attends to works written up to 1978.

Saperstein Marc, *Moments of Crisis in Jewish-Christian Relations*, London: SCM Press, 1989.

The four delineated moments of crisis are: Late Antiquity, the High Middle Ages, the Age of the Reformation and the modern period up to the Holocaust. A fifth is the present with its 'Burdens and Opportunities'. This is eighty pages of essential reading from an eminent Jewish scholar.



Shermis Michael & Arthur E. Zannoni (eds.), *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, New York: Paulist Press, 1991.

Leading scholars in the field write on various topics including: 'The Holocaust, a Tragedy of Christian History', intermarriage of Jews and Christians, 'Antisemitism or anti-Judaism?', 'The Land Israel in the dialogue and the theology of religious pluralism'. Especially important is Michael Cook's essay on the New Testament and its impact on Jewish-Christian relations.

Wigoder Geoffrey, *Jewish-Christian Relations since the Second World War*, Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1988.

The General Editor of the Encyclopedia Judaica and an expert in this area has provided here the keenest Jewish commentary on the various church statements.

Wilson Marvin R., *Our Father Abraham. Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1989.

It is only in the last decade that the evangelical (or biblically conservative) wing of Protestantism has formally entered the arena of Jewish-Christian relations. Marvin Wilson, Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Gordon College, Wenham, Mass., is in the forefront of this new venture. What he has produced here must be of immediate interest to evangelicals, and must be attended to by them, but its reading public should include Christians of all persuasions. The questions for discussion at the end of each chapter provide an added bonus.

## **\Recent Church Statements on Jewish and Christian Relations**

Brockway Allan & others (editors and commentators), *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and its Member Churches*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1988.

This collection of church documents ranges over the period 1948-1987. An unfortunate omission is the Church of Scotland General Assembly's "Christians and Jews Today" (May 1985). The commentaries are very helpful.

Croner Helga (ed.), *Stepping Stones to Further Jewish-Christian Relations*, London/New York: Stimulus Books, 1977.

Contains almost all the documents issued by the churches, Roman Catholic, Protestant and ecumenical (WCC), from the Second World War to 1975.

Croner Helga (ed.), *More Stepping Stones to Jewish-Christian Relations*, New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

This is an updating of *Stepping Stones* (1977) and includes documents issued from 1975 to 1983, plus two omissions from the earlier collection. However, with the exception of the statements which emanate from the Vatican, the status of each is unclear. This is an indispensable work for those interested in what has been and is being said on the various topics.

## **Bibliographies**

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Chapter V contains an excellent annotated bibliography of works appearing from 1975 to 1989, compiled by Eugene Fisher. It is without equal.

See Also:

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